

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 372

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TAGS: PINT, RSOR, CH, US

SUBJECT: PEKING DIPLOMATS'S ANALYSIS OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT
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REF: HONG KONG 1789

1. PEKING DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS' REMARKS TO US ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE, FROM THE CHINESE POINT OF VIEW, OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT HAVE EMBRACED ABOUT THE SAME VARIETY OF INTERPRETATION AS U.S. PRESS COMMENTARIES. BUT THERE HAS BEEN COMPARATIVELY LITTLE EMPHASIS HERE (EXCEPT BY THE SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES) ON THE MORE NEGATIVE SINO-U.S. BILATERAL ASPECTS FLOATED BY THE AMERICAN PRESS; FOR EXAMPLE, MOST DIPLOMATS DISCOUNT ANY CHINESE INTEREST IN AFFECTING THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY. MOST SEEM TO JUDGE THAT MAO BASICALLY WANTED, AND USED, THE VISIT TO SYMBOLIZE TO THE WORLD AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY TO THE CHINESE POPULACE CONTINUITY IN THE PRC'S FOREIGN POLICY AT A TIME OF DOMESTIC CHANGE. WE AGREE WITH
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THIS RELATIVE STRESS (AND PRIVATELY, SO DO SOME SOVIET DIPLOMATS).

2. IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR IN RECENT DAYS THAT THE CURRENT ATTACK (OR COUNTERATTACK, AS THE PRC PRESS EXPLAINS IT) AGAINST TENG AND OTHERS ON THE "RIGHT," AND POSSIBLY BY IMPLICATION AGAINST SOME OF CHOU EN-LAI'S POLICIES, WAS ALREADY PLANNED BEFORE THE END OF LAST YEAR. FOR THAT REASON IT SEEMS ALL THE MORE SIGNIFICANT THAT THE MAJOR OFFICIAL DOMESTIC POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS SINCE THEN, ON NEW YEAR'S DAY AND FEBRUARY 24, WERE PRESENTED IN THE PRC PRESS ALONG WITH, AND VISUALLY SUBORDINATE TO, ATTENTION TO THE MAO MEETINGS, FIRST WITH THE EISENHOWERS (FEATURING ALSO THE INVITATION TO MR. NIXON) AND THEN WITH THE FORMER PRESIDENT. THESE HAVE BEEN MAO'S ONLY PUBLIC APPEARANCES THIS YEAR. WHERE THE CHINESE PUBLIC IS CONCERNED, THE MESSAGE WOULD APPEAR TO BE: FOREIGN POLICY, AND ESPECIALLY THE MONUMENTAL FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE REPRESENTED IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, IS A MATTER ABOVE THE DOMESTIC FRAY. NOWHERE IN THE POSTER AND MEDIA ATTACKS ON TENG HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO DISCOVER SUGGESTIONS THAT HE FAILED IN ANY KEY RESPECT TO EXECUTE THE CHAIRMAN'S POLICIES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. SHOULD SUCH ATTACKS OCCUR, WE THINK THEY WOULD NOT REFLECT ADVERSELY ON THE BASIC VALUE OF THE AMERICAN CONNECTION OR THE MAIN LINES OF FOREIGN POLICY.

3. MANY DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS--THE SOVIETS IN PARTICULAR--ARE FASCINATED BY WHAT PURPOSE COULD HAVE BEEN SERVED BY THE EIGHT HOURS OR SO OF TALKS BETWEEN MR. NIXON AND ACTING PREMIER HUA. ONE RATHER PREVALENT VIEW IS THAT THEIR TALKS MAY HAVE BEEN AS MUCH AS ANYTHING ELSE A TRAINING VEHICLE FOR HUA. THAT ONE COROLLARY PURPOSE AMONG OTHERS MAY HAVE BEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE IS SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS HERE SEEM STILL TO BE FRETTERING MORE ABOUT THE LENGTH OF THE NIXON-HUA TALKS THAN ABOUT ANY OTHER ASPECT OF THE VISIT. THAYE
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